

***How to Develop a Latino Consumer
Group: Lessons Learned from Santa
Barbara County***

by

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***Santa Barbara County Alcohol Drug
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Partners in Hope

- CSS approved Program (1 of 10)
 - SB is a Medium Sized County
400,000 residents
 - Provides services to consumers
countywide
 - Peer to peer services
 - Services to family members
 - One of three FTE's is required to
be bilingual

Sustainability of Latino Groups

- Support group for Latinos initiated by MHSA Project Staff
- MHSA Staff assigned to support existing group in Santa Barbara
- Group meets twice a month
- Weekly calls to check in and remind all participants of meeting
- Food is provided
- Childcare is provided
- Everyone is welcomed

Latino Engagement

- Participation as a consumer
- Provided outreach services as a volunteer
- Transitioned to employment within the county as a Partners in Hope peer recovery specialist
- Established additional Latino Support groups and activities as a peer recovery specialist

Lessons Learned

- Our priorities may not be communities priorities
 - Priorities of the community may be different than ours.....
- The needs are basic – its about inclusion
 - Transformation Means Inclusion
 - Isolation is common – support networks are important
- This is a partnership
 - Partnership with MHSA team
 - Independence is defined differently
 - Cultural similarities with staff are strong bonds
- Groups have a collectivist mentality
 - Meetings are all inclusive (family, children, extended kin)
 - How does this fit with traditional approach
 - There is safety in numbers
 - Cultural bonds are strong and serve to bring the group together
 - Child care is also a need

Lessons Learned Continued

- Isolation
 - Language, economics, residential status, MH stigma,
 - Lack of extended kinship family
 - Reduction of Services
 - Great need for peer run support services
 - Lack of resource materials - needs for ethnic communities are often an afterthought
 - Simple translations may not work due to cultural complexity and realities
- Participants look to staff for leadership
 - Peer run groups are a goal not a beginning
 - Leadership must be developed – fear, self doubt must be addressed
- Members are inclusive
 - Concepts of family are infused into group
- MHSA Plans
 - Strengthen all consumer efforts for peer run activities

Engagement Efforts

- Meetings must begin differently.
 - Process of Conocimiento must take place.
 - Introduction, where are you from, how long have you been here, tell us about your family.
 - Provide a “platica” environment – create a sense of comfort – personalismo and confianza
 - Pleasantries go a long way - Buenas Noches etc.
 - Be aware of the importance of “dignidad”
 - Internalized stigma related to MH will have to be dealt with in the group
- Individualized efforts – personal outreach
 - Required a considerable amount of staff time
- Engage staff that serve Latino clients
- Hang out at the clinics
- Seek out other providers that serve Latino clients/families

Engagement Efforts

- Client/family to client/family invitations
- Hold meetings in community settings
- At first, it is important to stay consistent - Don't change location of meetings and times
- Recognize that Latino is inclusive of multiple nationalities
- Recognize that communities have long term memories
 - How many initiatives have engaged ethnic communities to address issues only to stop due to funding....
- Recognize that communities fear county systems
 - To many communities we are one system